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Rejuvenating Filial Piety with Media Technology in the Information Age?

The Use of Digital Gadgets for Inter-Generational Care in Ageing Society[1)]

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Abstract

The thousand-year-old Confucian virtue of filial piety (FP) has been significant to foster inter-generational dynamics; this is particularly the case in the 21st Century when younger generations are working in a nomadic mode in which they cannot take care of their ageing parents in the same residence. Likely, mobile communication gadgets in the information age can help to maintain the inter-generational communication, to the least. This paper attempts to draw the contours of the contradictions and dynamics of ageing societies in the informational society. As mobile phones become social necessity for most Japanese and they are used for intensive social networking, the research question is: how senior adults use the new media for active ageing and in what way, mobile communication helps to rejuvenate filial piety? This paper examines the socio-familial-spatial (social networking, location and place) relevance of mobile communication, emphasizing the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by/with/for ageing population, for realizing the active ageing and rejuvenating filial piety. As society moves towards the intensification of ICT use, though affecting differential inter-personal relationships, this study evidently points to a positive ageing process in the informational 21st Century.

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1. Asia's Demographic Transitions in Global Ageing

Demographic transitions become a global challenge, as the ageing momentum is at its high speed in recent decades, problematically juxtaposing the economic liberalization of the globalization project (Lai 2008a/b; *The Economist* 2009). To put the ageing dynamism in its historical place, the United Nations estimates in 2007 (UNPD 2007) noted that the societal ageing ratio (percentage of those age 65 or above in the total population), in the developing countries, was a low at 6% in 2005, but was forecast to rise to 7.5% in 2020 and 14.6% in 2050. The most recent estimates by the United Nations (2009) confirm such trend too (see Fig.1, Fig.2 and Fig.3). Hence, their elderly ratio was forecasted to double in around 30 years. China is one of such examples that, due to its one-child policy since 1978, it has over 12% of the population are aged 60 or above in 2009; but will gradually rise to 33% in 2050 (*Xinhua News Agency*, 4.July 2009). The critical problems for ageing society in developing economies are many, not least are the 'cash' – the financing (in terms of health care and pension system) and 'care' of the fragile aged (CSIS 2009, Jackson, et.al., 2009).

Global ageing has been identified as a historic challenge for human society, since the last decade of the 20th Century, by the United Nations' institutions, UN Population Fund, World Health Organizations and alike. More recently, it has repeatedly stressed by the U.S. Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS 2009) as having a strategic significance for human survival if the problem is not probably dealt with. According to the United Nations' World Population Prospects (U.N., 2009, p.x) predictions, from 2009 to 2050, the number of persons aged 60 or over is expected almost to triple, globally, increasing from 739 million in 2009 to 2 billion by 2050. For the same period, a correspond increase from 65% to 79% of the world older person live in the less developed regions. Here, the demographic challenge is not only for the developed countries with a decline birth rate and prolonged longevity, but also for the NIEs which follow similar, though at a speedy rate, of the ageing trend (see Fig.1, Fig.2 and Fig.3), as the ageing momentum is at its highest in recent decades, East Asia in particular (Lai 2007, 2008a).

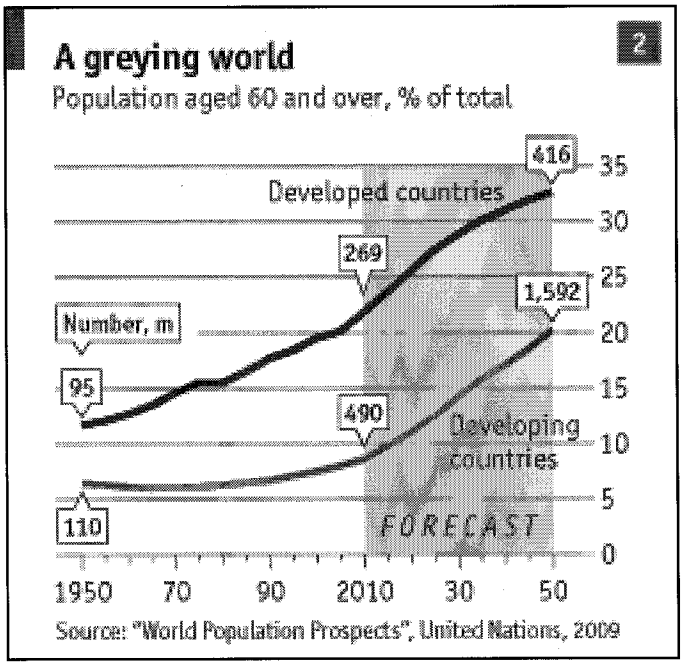
Fig. 1: Global Ageing Table (aged 65 or above as % of the total population) 2009

Japan	23%
Italy	20%
Sweden	19%
Germany	18%
Norway	17%
Spain	17%
Austria	16%

France	16%
Swiss	16%
U.K.	16%
Netherlands	14%
USA	13%
Australia	13%
Canada	13%
Hong Kong	12%
Taiwan	11%
South Korea	10%
Singapore	9%
China	10%

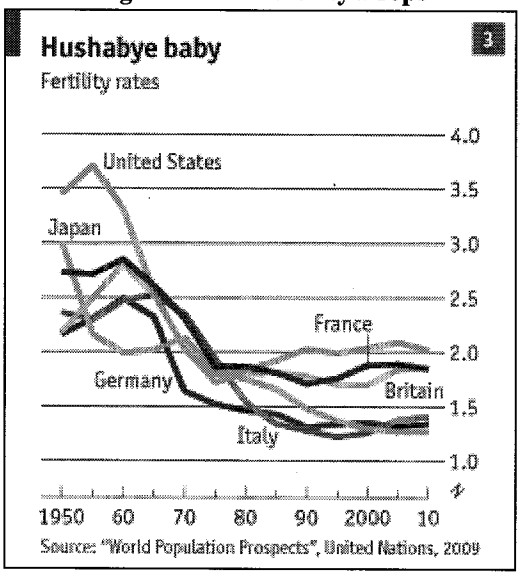
(Source: Lai 2008a, authors' updates)

Fig.2: A Greying World



(The Economist, 27.June 2009, Special Report, p.4)
http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13888045

Fig.3: Global Fertility Drops

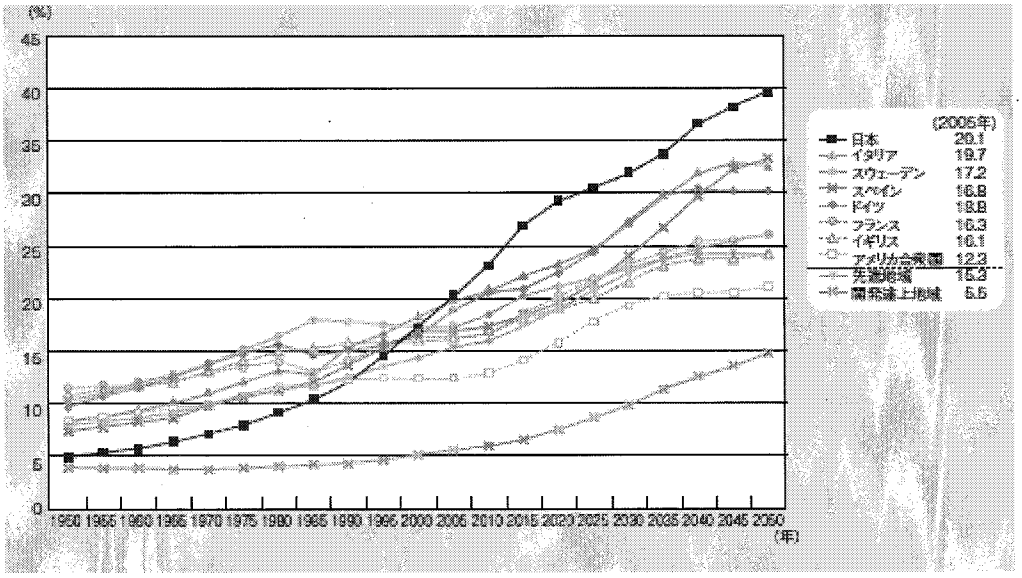


(The Economist, 27.June 2009, Special Report on Ageing Population, p.5)
http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13888118

Compared with ageing process in the Western developed economies, demographic transitions began much later in East Asia than in the West (Mason and Kinugasa 2008), the momentum is more dramatic with a hyper and speedy one (Lai 2008a, Tsuno and Hooma 2009). In less than 30 years, demographic transitions occurred in Japan and all Asia's NIEs: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. These countries have been transformed from the high birth and death rate population model to a low birth rate (less than 2 in terms of Total Fertility Rate, TFR) and ageing one. Japan had 22% of the total population aged 65 or above, whilst Korea achieved 11% in 2009 (Birdsall, et.al. 2001; Rostow 2000; Lai 2007, 2008a).

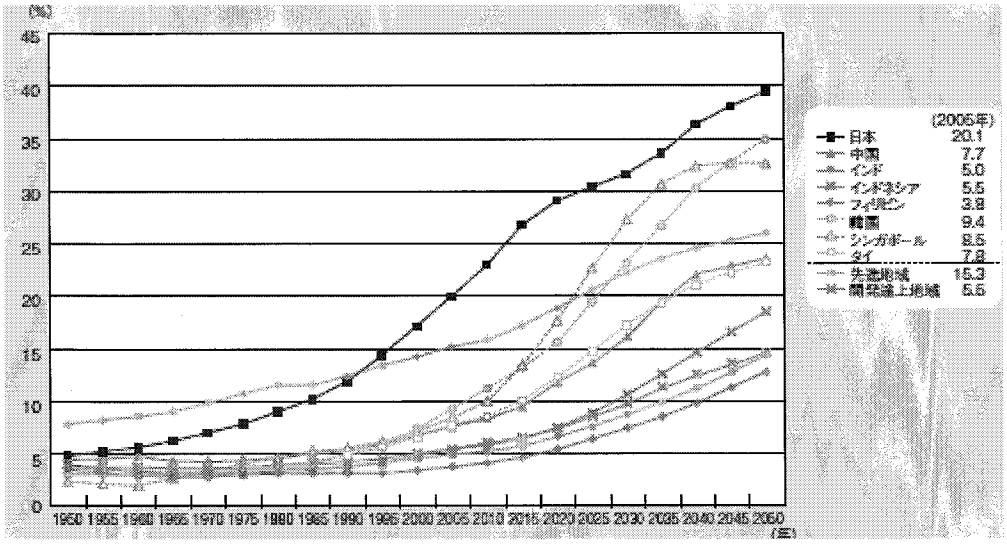
Historically, Japan led the post World War II rapid economic development in East Asia, from mid-1960s to 1980s, and later followed by South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1980s to 1990s. They are undoubtedly representatives of the phenomenal *East Asian Economic Miracle*, a term coined by the World Bank (World Bank 1993). Here, the positive role of the baby boomers at the post World War II industrialization is important, supplying sufficient labour force for economic development (See Fig.4, and Fig.5).

Fig.4: Trend of Ageing in Western Countries and Japan.



Cabinet Office, Japan (2009), p.11

Fig.5: Trend of Ageing in Asian Countries and Japan



Cabinet Office, Japan (2009), p.11

The demographic transitions in Japan (since 1960s), South Korea and Taiwan (since 1970s) towards ageing society have been very much due to natural growth – all three countries are a "closed" population system with minimal immigration (less than 1.5% of the population). Whilst the population systems in Hong Kong and Singapore are

somewhat relatively "open", with large immigrants throughout the second half of 20th Century. In spite of the differences in the population systems, all economies experience demographic transitions towards ageing, with a decline of fertility and mortality (Mason and Kinugasa 2008).

2. The Thousand-Year-Old Calling for Filial Piety in 21st Century?

Confucianism defines socio-cultural ideals for East Asia; China, Korea and Japan in particular. One of the key virtues of Confucianism is *Filial Piety* (FP) – taking care of the ageing parents in one's life course. The obvious virtues are shown in the Chinese classics, the *Twenty-Four Paragon of Filial Piety*. Here, social reciprocity and familial loyalty, following Confucian norms, attribute to Filial Piety (FP) as both virtue and behaviours (Meyer 2000).

With blood-tie, the sense of belonging and togetherness and the synergy of time, space and the upward oriented inter-generational social reciprocity, define FP. The most obvious, or the extreme manifestation / demonstration of FP, presents in funeral activities – customs, ritual and rule; yet the customization of funeral can easily move into a service industry. More specifically, funeral ceremony marks the end as well as the new beginning of FP (Lee 2003, Suzuki 2000). Yet, there is a global trend of lowering fertility rate as rapid economic development: all Asian NIEs have been experiencing a significant drop of total fertility rate (TFR) to less than 1.5 per woman (K-S.Chang 2003, M-C.Chang 2004, Eu 2003, Golini 2003, Tu 2003, Yap 2003). Hence, the supply side of FP (sons and daughters) is sharply reduced following the drop of TFR. In this section, socio-economic familial changes will be discussed in relation to the FP practice – caring the elderly.

2.1 Work-Family Time / Space / Intergenerational Caring: Burnt Out and Overloading?

Under a more flexible, globalizing, production regime, workers have to moving into different localities for job and to engage in a 7-day-and-24-hour working cycle – people are more nomadic yet less available for taking care of the ageing parents.

Traditional role model for caring the aged within the realm of FP has its limits, if not withering away: a nation-wide survey by the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1994 found that 60% of the care-givers thought their burden was too much. Furthermore, the ever-increasing demand for paid job performance and the service for family life are making heads of family (women in particular) overloading, if not burnt out; the burnt out tendency will be much increased if the duty of FP is included in the consideration.

This is in strong contrast to the early 1970s that women were willing to scarify for FP; Salaff (1995) has rightly pinpointed, and it has been well researched by feminist

literature, that the down-side of FP in Asian societies and family (in the case of Hong Kong) during industrialization era, has been exploiting the women's life chance.

To cope with external demands that the family members are differentially exposed to the burden of responsibility, women (the never-married daughters and/or daughters-in-law) are mostly positioned to bear the FP responsibility (Sung 2003, Zhan & Montgomery 2003). For Chinese patriarchy culture, which is contradictory in nature, the women mostly have to be scarified for familial goals (Meyer 2000).

In general, the modern societal and economic demands for family (and its members) are more than ever under the conditions of labour market restructuring and uncertain economic outlooks. Women participation in economy becomes a norm yet this undermines the time-space arrangement for managing work-family life. Except family gifted by economic and cultural assets, most families in present economic conditions (ups and downs of business cycle) are under stress, though most families can still be functional but not healthy.

2.2 People Choose their own Life Course: FP as Withering Old Virtue?

For younger generations, the ideas of planning and choosing how to write his/her own biography in many ways fits into the neo-liberal economics of consumer sovereignty: people have the idea that their own actions determine their own success or failure – definitely this orientation is exactly the spirits (ideology) of *Asian Miracle* and its instrumentalism for welfare development (Kwon 2005). But the built-in effect of this orientation is the repetitive planning (for planning sake) without the moral calling (have to get married and give birth) for actual experiencing the social reality on the one hand, and the procrastination of the social life-task (responsibility) in the name of continuing learning, life-long education. All these increase the tendency for de-standardization of life course, developmental tasks and moral obligations that have not been taking up by younger generation – these are the inertia for those kid-dults to moving on to take up social (citizenship) responsibility, as well as the familial one of FP (Lai 2005b, Lai & Abe 2005).

More specific, economic restructuring fosters a sense of uncertainty, particularly in labour market: job security and career development for people; particularly for the younger generation. This sense of uncertainty is paradoxically anchored with the ever-increasing calculative, rational planning for possible future work and familial engagements (FP against which job, where to live, with whom for courtship and marriage, etc.).

The systematic calling for planning future is not just affecting the younger one, the middle-age workers are called upon for retraining, as well as their continuing education (Beck 2000). The choice biography concept implies not just young people, but also the aging ones, to plan for their own (not historically defined, standardized life

course). All these exercises are not just cognitive-mental one, but are being institutionalized into everyday life that people are engaged in the projection, planning and evaluation of their own life course – the biographization of life course (Vinken 2004; Mayer 2004).

Helping the biographization of life course of younger generation are the state policy and new family wealth and outlook in late 20th Century. Both the state and the upwardly mobile, better-off family (in comparison with their previous cohort) dynamics reinforce the delaying and exit strategies of the younger generation to take up formal socially expected role for adulthood, fatherhood / motherhood... as well as FP. On the other hand, the apologetic and sympathetic attitudes of the parents upon their adult-kid (who have married) help the formulation of the alternative FP (as service) delivery. Furthermore, the developmental state's further extension of higher education (postgraduate level), equal opportunities for men and women, and the promotion of progressive rights for women, also reinforce the personalized, individual choice for alternative life course.

In short, the global system-demanded high mobility (working across-borders) and flexibility (working at home and off-hour over time work) of the labour is the embryo for disruptive family life cycle: late marriage, never marriage or co-habitation, or no FP duties, reflecting the individualistic lifestyle orientation, as well as the lifestyle options-seeking and experimentation for both sexes (particularly the case for those who want to be 'career' women).

2.3 Professionalization of Elderly Care: Short-Cut to, or Short-Circuit of, FP?

Thanks to economic growth, professionalization of nursing care for elderly seemingly is a way of FP sub-contracting: the state funded welfare agencies sometimes reinforce this trend – perhaps the more extreme form is the so-called 'Social Hospitalization' (cf. Lai 2001, Wu 2004, MHLW 2008).

Adjusting and adaptive to the ever-increasing care-burden (short cut to, and short-circuit) of FP will become a permanent feature of caring the aged, in our hyper-modern life course. In reality, professional care protocols (regulations on visitors) are more often than not, unintentionally limit the extent of FP. Or, in its variations, professionalism legitimises a regime of FP sub-contracting; for instance, mobile-ambulance (day/time) caring regime in the so-called community caring regime. In short, the state intervention shapes the very different, mostly with unintended consequences, form of caring regime and therefore FP can be negotiable and adaptive, even following the logic of marketization (Lan 2000, Lai 2007).

Distancing from their traditional role of familial carer, in a highly competitive society, women have to work and be independent – that is the new form of the (Western state) sponsored feminism. They gain money from paid work, and renegotiate

the caring role with the husband or their parents. Yet, daughters-in-law turn to the employment of waged caregivers not only because of their shortage of time and to lessen the burdens of labour, but also to retrieve some autonomy from the authority of their mothers-in-law (Lan 2002, Kim et al. 1991, Kim & Kim 2003, Liu et al. 2000).

For caring the aging population, in Asian societies excepting Japan, the use of guest/foreign domestic labour is more than obvious. More recently, in Hong Kong, it is not uncommon that in private middle-class nursing home, foreign home helper (FHH) are also assisting the more formal case, though the children and relatives of the aged do visit them regularly; isn't it a new version of caring regime powered by mobile guest workers or outsourcing and/or subcontracting of elderly care?

The caring regime for out-sourcing and sub-contracting regime is seemingly functional and coupling with the state-advocated familism, which emphasizes on the quality of care and less-resources for better-quality of family life, in open (labour) market where efficiency and timeliness are the key for success. Yet, the adoption of FHH in family and/or community life is becoming a norm in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, for this, Japan is timely considering this option to cope with labour shortage in the long term care for aging population.

3. Differential Policy Initiatives to Cope with Ageing Japan

Un December 2007, the number of people aged 90 or over topped 1.2 million, over 27 million of the population aged 65 or above (21% of total population of 127.77 million), including about 25,000 centenarians, and a very low birth rate (1.29 in terms of Total Fertility Rate). Baby boomers turned 60 in 2007, for the first time in Japanese history, this also marked the beginning of the shrinking of its population. All these happen with the economic dynamism of the hyper-mobility of younger population, juxtaposing a community-locality fixed aged population (sons and daughters no longer live with their aged parents for instance); the question for enabling contacts and to enhance inter-generational dynamics (e.g., filial piety) in the family and beyond becomes the challenge for Japan.

The new demographic challenge of fewer children and further greying population, plus the beginning of the shrinking population since 2006, are certain to cause socio-economic adjustment problem in the decades to come. For instance, the world's second-largest economy will have a labour shortage, particularly for those jobs for caring the aged, the likely erosion of the tax base, the burden on the pay-as-you-go pension system, and increasing demand for support for the expanding elderly population...(Aspalter and Lai 2003; Goodman, Ed. 2002; Lai 2001, 2007, 2008a; MHLW 2005a, 2006). Here, the population pyramid has become a 'jar' like shape (see Fig.6, Fig.7, Fig.8).

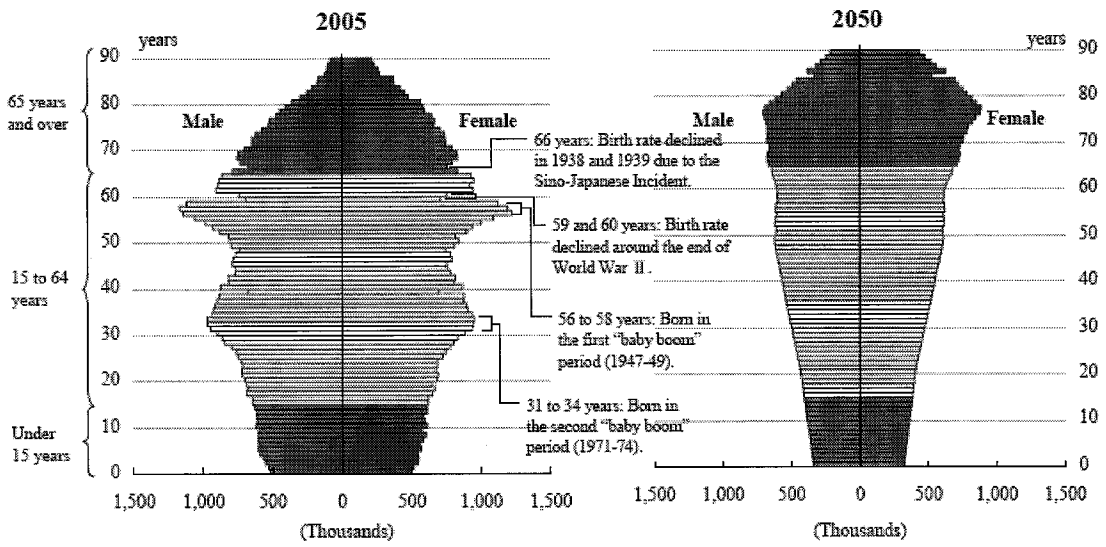
Fig.6: Japan: Projected population 2005-2055

Year	Population (thousands)			Population growth		Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	Population density (per 1 ㎢)
	Total	Male	Female	Number (thousands)	Rate (%)		
2005	127,768	62,349	65,419			95.3	338
2006	127,762	62,310	65,453	−6	−0.00	95.2	338
2007	127,694	62,239	65,455	−69	−0.05	95.1	338
2008	127,568	62,138	65,429	−126	−0.10	95.0	338
2009	127,395	62,015	65,381	−173	−0.14	94.9	337
2010	127,176	61,868	65,309	−219	−0.17	94.7	337
2011	126,913	61,698	65,215	−264	−0.21	94.6	336
2012	126,605	61,506	65,099	−308	−0.24	94.5	335
2013	126,254	61,292	64,962	−351	−0.28	94.4	334
2014	125,862	61,059	64,803	−392	−0.31	94.2	333
2015	125,430	60,806	64,624	−431	−0.34	94.1	332
2016	124,961	60,535	64,426	−469	−0.37	94.0	331
2017	124,456	60,246	64,209	−505	−0.40	93.8	329
2018	123,915	59,942	63,974	−540	−0.43	93.7	328
2019	123,341	59,620	63,721	−574	−0.46	93.6	326
2020	122,735	59,284	63,451	−606	−0.49	93.4	325
2021	122,097	58,933	63,164	−638	−0.52	93.3	323
2022	121,430	58,569	62,861	−667	−0.55	93.2	321
2023	120,735	58,192	62,543	−695	−0.57	93.0	319
2024	120,015	57,804	62,210	−721	−0.60	92.9	318
2025	119,270	57,406	61,864	−745	−0.62	92.8	316
2026	118,502	56,996	61,504	−767	−0.64	92.7	314
2027	117,713	56,581	61,132	−789	−0.67	92.6	311
2028	116,904	56,156	60,748	−810	−0.69	92.4	309
2029	116,074	55,722	60,352	−830	−0.71	92.3	307
2030	115,224	55,279	59,944	−850	−0.73	92.2	305
2031	114,354	54,829	59,525	−870	−0.75	92.1	303
2032	113,464	54,371	59,093	−890	−0.78	92.0	300
2033	112,555	53,905	58,650	−909	−0.80	91.9	298
2034	111,627	53,433	58,194	−928	−0.82	91.8	295
2035	110,679	52,953	57,726	−947	−0.85	91.7	293
2036	109,714	52,467	57,247	−965	−0.87	91.6	290
2037	108,732	51,974	56,757	−983	−0.90	91.6	288
2038	107,733	51,477	56,257	−998	−0.92	91.5	285
2039	106,720	50,974	55,746	−1,013	−0.94	91.4	282
2040	105,695	50,467	55,227	−1,026	−0.96	91.4	280
2041	104,658	49,957	54,701	−1,037	−0.98	91.3	277
2042	103,613	49,444	54,168	−1,046	−1.00	91.3	274
2043	102,560	48,930	53,630	−1,052	−1.02	91.2	271
2044	101,503	48,414	53,089	−1,057	−1.03	91.2	269
2045	100,443	47,898	52,545	−1,060	−1.04	91.2	266
2050	95,152	45,320	49,832	−5,291	−1.08	90.9	252
2055	89,930	42,748	47,182	−5,221	−1.12	90.6	238

Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, *Population Projections for Japan: 2006–2055* (January 2006). The projected population as of October 1 of each year (medium variant). Annual rate of growth (%) was computed by the formula $(\sqrt[n]{P_5/P_0}-1)\times 100$. P_0 and P_5 represent the population at the beginning of the period and the population at the end of the period, respectively. n represents the period.

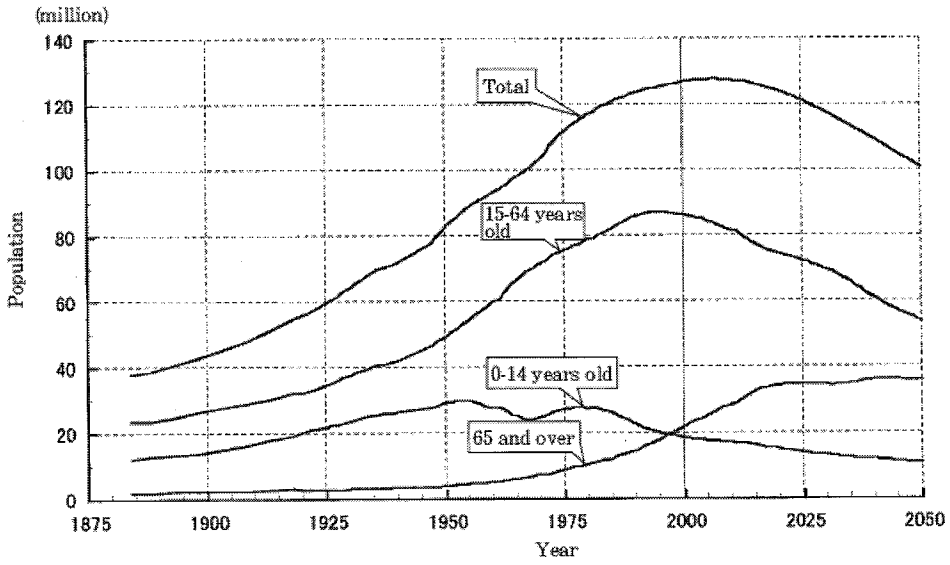
(Source: NIPSSR 2009)

Fig.7: Japan Population Pyramid (2005, 2050)



(Source: NIPSSR 2006)

Fig.8: Demographic Challenge



(Source: NIPSSR 2006)

For Japanese society at large, government, business organizations and NGOs in particular, is to enable the experience, skills and the capability of the elderly actively engaging, with population at large, for better quality of life; hence the demographic transitions (time-bomb?) have to be dealt with by all stakeholders. Our study illustrated below highlights such initiatives, with specific reference to active ageing in the information age.

As society has grown increasingly oriented toward nuclear families, the percentage of households where children and the elderly live under the same roof has been decreasing. In 1960, over 85% of the elderly lived with children, but this figure is now (2008) just over half; conversely, single person elderly households which accounted for only 5.4% in 1960 have increased to 29%, and another 35% were couple only households in 2007, compared to 7% in 1960 (NIPSSR 2008). A nation-wide survey by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1994 found that 60% of the care-givers thought their burden was too much. In short, it is becoming increasingly difficult to expect that families will provide full support for their elderly, and the problems of illness and long term care have been identified as the greatest concern of the elderly (Campbell and Ikegami 2003; Goodman, Ed. 2002; Maeda & Ishikawa 2000; Thang 2002; Watanabe and Lai 2001).

The new policy initiatives to cope with the challenge are more focused on restructuring of the financing of caring the aged, as well as the liberalization of caring services, which both enabled by the Long Term Care Insurance (*LTCI*), since April 2000. To enabling inter-generation dynamics to cope with ageing society, the half-smooth introduction of LTCI system in Japan, within its first eight years of implementation, has been full of changes, including the increase of both demand and supply for LTC, as well as the cost/price for the services, not least the premium has gone up more than 15% since April 2003. On the whole, people are satisfied with the reform (Lai 2007).

Learnt from the first five years of experience, the *Review of LTCI* in 2005 makes policy change in elderly care, with the main objective for the self-reliance of the elderly, by encouraging and training them to be active in self-care, including house cleaning and preparing meals – with the help of caregivers (MHLW 2005a/b, 2006); for instance, the new form of assistance limits the use of wheelchairs and instead, offers "resistance training" to increase muscle strength. The new, immediate, initiatives are focused on (the more fundamental shift from service to) self-help for those who can (re-train to) manage their daily tasks and keep health in good shape: elderly are 'required' to attend preventive care services: oral care, training to prevent health deteriorations and accidents, diet advice and preventive nursing care visit (Lai 2007).

The new policy initiatives since the *Review of LTCI* (2005) emphasize the better use, or the enhancement, of community resources, as well as the networking-cum-matching

of nursing caring with both professional and voluntary (NGOs) services, within and beyond the LTCI coverage. More importantly, it emphasizes the preventive elderly health services, health promotion, community engagement of, as well as reinforcing socio-familial inter-generation communications with, the senior adults on the one hand; and the maximal use of technologies, ICT in particular, to achieving active ageing-in-place (Cabinet Office, 2008; MHLW 2008). Some initiatives include social alarms and notifications (a service that enables help to be called by an older person), tele-care (an extension of alarm service, including caring-routine check-up and the related logistics), tele-health... all these have been developing for smart home and community care for the ageing-in-place (MHLW 2008; MIC 2008a/b).

4. Inertia and Dynamics of Ageing Policy and Familial Practices

Confronting ageing population, various policy initiatives have been in place for good ageing in Japan; not least is the Long Term Care Insurance (LTCI) system. A snapshot of the policy issues are examined below.

4.1 Activating the Ageing Population

Active ageing, in terms of golden age-ing, is one of the key policy goals in ageing Japan (cf. WHO 2001, 2002a/b: MHLW 2008). In 2005, people aged 65 or above who were currently working or looking for jobs were in total 4.9M, representing 7.4% of the nation's total labour force; it was estimated that the figure will rise to 7.24M, or 11% of the total, in 2015. Given the modesty of policy achievement, the *2005 White Paper on Elderly* is still 'urging' (rather than put it into policy program and budgetary terms that) the private sector and NGOs alike to increase working and/or meaningful employment opportunities for senior citizens by helping them to find jobs, establishing business, or volunteer work – various ways and modes for senior citizens to actively participate in society. The use of ICT to facilitate this re-engagement of the senior adults in communities is becoming a major policy initiative (MIC 2008a/b, MHLW 2008).

Moreover, the further liberalization of nursing care services by LTCI Review (since 2005) has been enabling the two-pronged approach (enhancing the inter-generational dynamics for family and in society, as well as the maximal use of technologies) of development, which is instrumental for better active ageing-in-place, this is particularly emphasized by policy papers on the *Ageing Japan* (MHLW 2008) and the *Ubiquitous-Japan*, information society for Japan (MIC 2007, MIC 2008a/b).

In spite of active policy initiatives for ageing population, Japan's performance in achieving the targets for active ageing: self reliance in general and ageing-in-place in particular, is just modest, despite the timely (though still belatedly) development of

LTCI, if we use the 2005 *White Paper on Elderly* (MHLW 2005a) as a base for assessment. By specifying the Japanese experience (experiment), we hope that there is policy learning for other ageing societies, especially in ageing Asia.

4.2 Re-Negotiating the Inter-Generational (Filial Piety) Familial Contract

Culturally, ageing was considered by Japanese as positively in terms of social image; as indicated by social survey: it was considered by a slight majority (54% of the respondents in a survey) that elderly people were favourably treated in society (DG-PCS 2004a). For inter-generation exchange and communication, only 44% of all the respondents showed willingness to make the effort (contrasting to 7% not willing to do it); but nearly half of the respondents had no particular preference for inter-generation exchange. Yet, it should be pointed out, as shown in the survey, that there was a stronger willingness for inter-generational exchange for the over 50s generation (over 50%).

For the inter-generation exchange, engaging in hobby, sports and life-long education was topped (49%), followed by volunteers work (44%) and the normal daily life activities (39%). It is interesting to note that nearly 50% of the respondents did not like to make inter-generational exchange, mainly because of the expected incompatibility between generations in terms of differential life experience, outlook and theme for exchanges (over 40%). And for the younger generations (20s to 30s age group), no spare time was the main obstacle to make inter-generational exchanges (details, see DG-PCS 2004a for discussion).

For the ageing population as a whole, majority (27%) of the opinions were in favour of improvement in the quality of life, or keeping the status quo; but there was a significant minority (20% on average, particularly among 30s, 50-70 generations) of the opinions would like to refocus on the present younger generation (DG-PCS 2004a).

The inter-generational dynamics, as well as the re-negotiation of familial contractual responsibilities and duties, are the most important aspect for ageing society: for this, people's attitudes toward the aged are the necessary conditions for better active ageing-in-place. In a recent nationwide survey on inter-generational issues and ageing (DG-PCS 2004a),[3] over half of the respondents considered the 'aged' as those over 70 (instead of 65) years of age. For the social image of the elderly, majority of the respondents (72%) viewed the aged as those having weak health conditions and 33% viewed the aged as having economic insecurity. Yet, the positive aspects of the elderly were not forgotten: 44% of the respondents opined that the aged were having experience and intelligence; the figures were higher (over 50%) for the younger

3) This is a nationwide interview-questionnaire survey commissioned by Japanese government, with sample size of 6,000 (response rate: 65.7%), by stratified random sampling of 1,000 samples for each 10-year cohort from age 20 or above to age 59, plus to 2,000 samples for age 60 or above, conducted during 27.Feburary to 14.March 2004.Details refer to DG-PCS 2004a.

generations of the 20s-40s age group.

4.3 Senior Citizens' Community Participation

Community participation of the elderly is instrumental for active and healthy ageing, but the sense of security is also important, as the key findings of the *2004 Survey on Community Participation of the Elderly*, (DG-PCS 2004b) indicate.[4)]

Senior adults in Japan are actively involving in community activities: in the same survey over 54% of the aged had such participation, a big jump of 11% increase if compared with survey 5 years ago. The predominant mode of activities is health and sport related (25.3%), followed by hobbies (24.8%) and community festival alike (19.6%). All types of major participatory activities showed an upward growth.

For one's ageing process: in Japan, there is a sense of insecurity among the people regarding ageing in future. For instance, in the nationwide survey, 80% of the respondents reportedly saying they felt insecure and uneasy about their future, particularly for those mature adults at the age of 40s (85%) and 50s (87%). Among those who expressed insecurity about ageing, 76% of the respondents viewed that the reducing social benefits (pension, nursing and health care) and the sense of insecurity was overwhelming (over 80%) among the younger generations of 20s to 40s age group (DG-PCS 2004a).

Overall speaking, older generation of Japanese is not just having positive participation in community activities, but also having a strong demand for, and expectation towards, healthy and active ageing in community. All these indicate the ageing population is more than ready to critically engage themselves in community activities – this will pose a policy challenge for the state, market and society to respond. For instance, on the issue of the financing of senior citizens' participation in community activities, it was overwhelmingly (64.3%) supportive for public financing, followed by participant charges (19.6%). This is similar for the public bodies' role in enabling community facilities (42.9%), the information network (38.2%) and manpower (24.8%).

5. Embracing New Media by Ageing Population?

With the maximal use of ICT, we are in the information age (ITU 2008, Katz, ed., 2008). And ageing policy initiatives have been taking the advantageous offerings of ICT for social development at large. In the following sections, three major arenas for active ageing in the information age are examined.

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4) This is a nationwide interview-questionnaire survey commissioned by Japanese government, with sample size of 4,000 (response rate: 71.5%), by stratified random sampling for age 60, conducted during 4.December to 23.December 2003.Details refer to DG-PCS 2004b.

5.1 Policy Learning for ICT-embedded Ageing Society

Policy learning for Active Ageing in the information age is more than obvious (Stone 2004, WHO 2001, 2002a/b). For instance, the European Union's *Action Plan (2007-2015) for Ageing Well in the Information Society*, accompanied by a new joint European research programme raising to over €1bn the research investment on ICT, targets at improving the life of older people at home, in the workplace and in society at large. These initiatives will likely contribute to allowing older Europeans to stay active for longer and live independently. Likely, it will be a triple win for stakeholders: improved quality of life and social participation for older people, new business opportunities for industries and more efficient and more personalised health and social services (European Commission 2007).

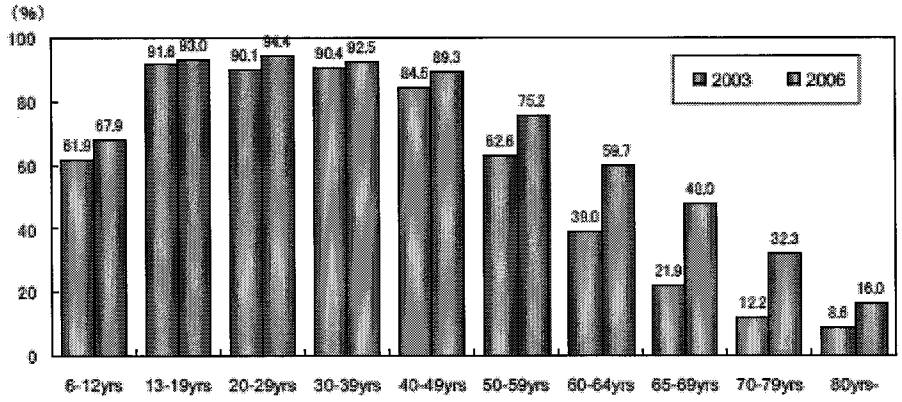
With the similar policy learning, Japanese government's goal is to build up a so-called *u-Japan* (*ubiquitous Japan*). This is very much in line with the policy initiative in most of the East Asian industrialized economies which have already been developing their portals for an e-government and e-commerce, and the development is always making mobile communication ubiquitous and omnipotent (Castells 1996; Lai 2004a, 2005a; MPHPT 2004a; MIC 2007, 2008a/b; MHLW 2008). This mega-project initiative will be instrumental for enabling better quality of ageing life. Information and communication technologies (ICT) promise borderless, flexible and ubiquitous contacts: real time, round-the-clock and anywhere...making geo-spatial conditions all but irrelevant. The ICT empowered digital gadgets, like mobile phone, PDA, iPod, have been constituting and facilitating various communicative encounters in both real and virtual worlds, as well as their differential form(s) of, mobile, mediated networking in new social life; obviously all these are well embraced by Japanese at large.

As highlighted in many communication studies that mobile phone can definitely extend one's personal networking and social space, at the very least extending the communicator's horizon of information; this is juxtaposing the reinforcement of the existing socio-familial contacts as well, say, the inter-generation communication between parents and kids, senior adults to their younger family members (Ito, et al. 2005; Katz, Ed. 2008; Lai 2008b; Ling 2004). Yet, the diffusion of mobile communication is socially differentiated, so do the beneficiaries for mobile digital gadgets (phone and PDA) users.

In spite of the increasingly taking up of mobile communication by Japanese society, there is an age-specific digital divide in terms of the usage of mobile communication, as shown in the nationwide *Communications Usage Trend Surveys 2006* (MIC 2007; Fig.9, Fig.10 and Fig.11): contrasting a very high usage rate of the mobile Internet (79%) by the younger generations (age group 20-39), only 30% of those aged above 65 used mobile phone. Similar digital divides are evident in terms of household income

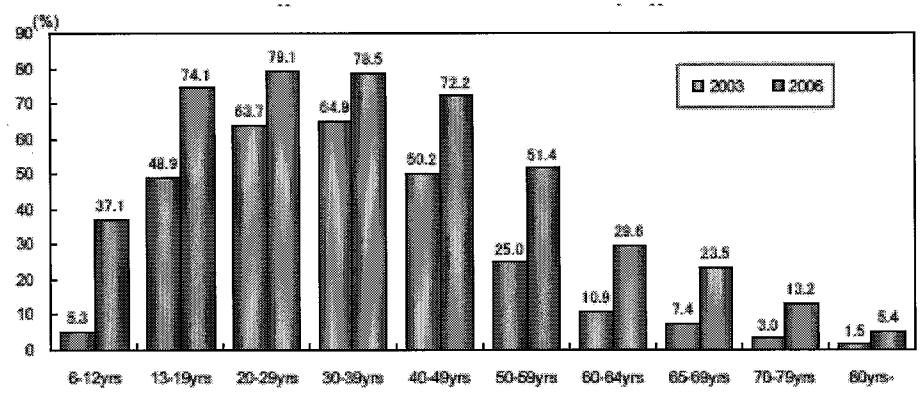
and the mode of access. This is in line with other related studies on the Internet usage; it also confirms such a discrepancy, along the (fault-) lines of socio-economic status in contemporary Japanese society (Lai 2008b).

Fig.9: Internet Use by Age



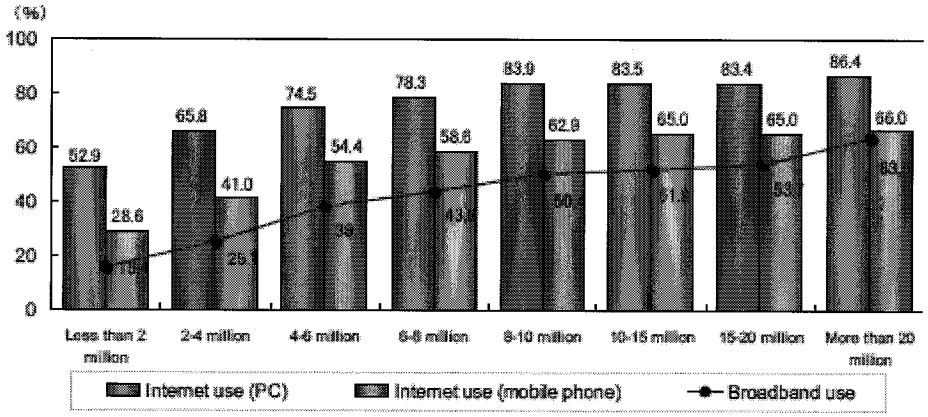
(Source: MIC 2007)

Fig.10: Mobile Internet Use by Age



(Source: MIC 2007)

Fig.11: Internet / Broadband Use by Household Income



(Source: MIC 2007)

5.2 New Media for Active Ageing Life

Despite low penetration rates and belated development, mobile communication technologies have been beneficial to Japan's elderly population, and show even greater promise for the future. Two obvious case illustrations, with strong relevance for ageing-in-place, stand out in the *u-Japan* project. First, it is the advanced application of the global-positioning–system (GPS) with the cellular mobile communication network. For example, the monthly Yen 210 "ima-doco" service, to track the where about of the mobile phone user, with a GPS location-based device embedded on the specific subscriber's mobile phone, connecting to the cellular mobile communication networks, developed by NTT-DoCoMo, to find and locate children and senile elderly) has been well received by customers, who want to know where their aged and younger (children) member real time location is.

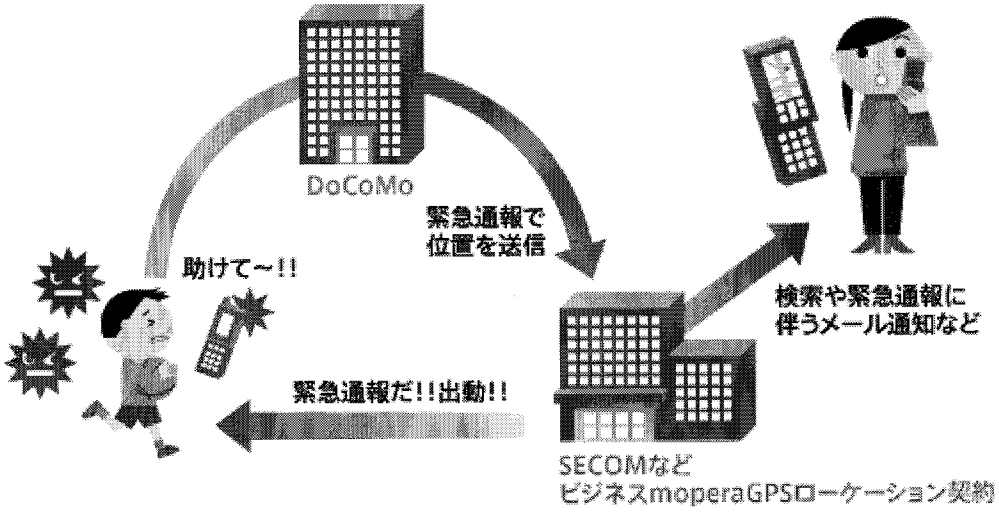
Similar services are well sought of, and subsequently provided by other mobile phone operating agencies, like au-KDDI and the Softbank. Despite their differential pricing by different mobile service operating agencies, they are somewhat in common to address the 'monitoring' or 'surveillance' and online-real time contacting aspects for the younger and elders in the family: children and elderly in particular. In addition, there is also alarm forwarding functions to the family members, via the security agency. In emergency mobile phone user can press the alarm which forwards helping message to the control centre. Or if the mobile phone user is unable to respond, due to dangerous conditions, to the pre-set contact time period (say, beyond 1 hour non-response) or outside the signal-catchment area, (say, route to and back from school/shopping) the mobile phone's last known or real time locational signal will be automatically transmitted to the concerned parties for follow up action,(NTT, 2008).

Mobile communication service oriented toward elderly health needs is also reflected

in au-KDDI's Helpnet and NTT's Life Support. The former is a one-button push emergency service to signal the location of the caller, the latter connects volunteers with elderly people living alone (Srivastava, 2004, p.249; 2005; See Fig.12).

Fig.12:GPS-Location based "Ima-Doco" Service to keep Track about the Location of Family Member
Mobile Phone User can either Alarm to the Cellular Network, or the Network check the Location of the User (is he/she within the defined catchment-boundaries?)

Alarm Messages or Signals forward to Service Subscriber's designated Helping Agencies.



(Source: NTT DoCoMo http://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/service/location/report/)

The second example is e-health and/or tele-health service initiatives. Maintaining good health conditions is an integral part for active ageing-in-place (at home and living in the community), some municipal government and health organizations have been experimenting the e-health or tele-health initiatives, by transferring medical information and advice through broadband network (MIC 2005, 2007). These initiatives enable a close and real time monitoring of seniors adults' health conditions, and offering timely medical advice and referrals. Undoubtedly these sorts of the pro-ageing-in-place initiatives are only feasible when u-Japan project proceeds to a maturing stage. It is obvious that the promise of ageing-in-place, with an electronic-digitally integrated health service regime, is beginning to fulfil.

In other words, frequent users of mobile phone are mostly the younger generations. But the beneficiary for the less frequent users should not be underestimated (cf.,Oksman and Turtiainen 2004; Wang 2005). For instance, mobile communication can extend the sense of networking (and hence social space extension) for vulnerable groups, like the elderly and children. For the elderly, more initiatives from government

and business sectors are recently attempting to bring them onto mobile communicative accessible.

Another example for the ICT application is for the promotion of social justices, as discriminations against senior adults, not least the problem of elderly abuse (estimated 11% of the total elderly population), are becoming social problem in Japan (*The Japan Times*, 6.January 2005; Lai 2007). A nationwide survey (DG-PCS 2004a) reported that over half of the survey respondents viewed that elderly people were somewhat discriminated (or the society has prejudice over the elderly): the younger generations (20s to 30s, over 66%) have more concern about the societal prejudice over the elderly. For the actual experience, the survey revealed that 18% experienced discriminative ageism in work place and employment; particularly for 25% of those in the age group 50-64.

To cope with the emerging discriminations against elderly (abuse), a better communication networking effort should be pursued, to enable more supportive communicative network among elderly groups, as well as making elderly communication beyond their cohorts. Here, the offerings from ICT (mobile phones, the Internet and other digital gadgets), as shown in our previous discussion, should have a positive contribution. Hence, the essence of ageing-in-place can be realized with appropriate ICT.

5.3 Envisioning Mobile Communication for Active Ageing!

In 2007, there are increasing senior adults taking up mobile communication with their family members and friends (MIC 2007); this is following the momentum for mobile communication at the turn of this Century – the trend that senior adults in Japan were actively involving in community activities. One new and important aspect of their community activism is their high utilization of ICT and mobile communication. The study found that 17.9% of the surveyed elderly were frequent users of mobile phone, followed by fax (10.3%), and the internet and e-mailing (4.7%). Though the senior adults' use of ICT is comparatively lower than the younger generations, it is already an encouraging sign, for future developmental potential.

For comparison, computer and Internet usage in Hong Kong, one of the newly industrializing economies in Asia, have grown rapidly since mid-1990s: the computer penetration rate has had more than doubled (from 34.5% to 71.1%). The growth of internet penetration has even surged from 11.8% in 1998 to 64.9% in 2004. However the computer and internet usage are still lower among the older persons and the less educated. In particular, older persons aged 55-64 have a computer usage rate of 20.6% whereas those aged 65 and above has only 4% meanwhile the overall average of all persons aged 10 and above is 59.5% (Wong, et. al. 2005).

Compared with other Asian societies, Japanese ageing population is active in terms

of both community participation and mobile communication (Chi, et.al. 2001; Lai 2001, 2007; MHLW 2008; MIC 2008a/b; Suzuki 2000; Wu 2004). And because of the activeness of the elderly, their needs for further mobile communication in information society translate into actual new demand for new services and products in telecommunication market. For instance, mobile phone service providers are re-discovering the new market for the golden age!

From our field observation, senior adults in Japan also have an open attitude to embrace ICT in general and mobile communication in particular. Our recent fieldwork, with in-depth interviews and focus group, also reveals the following characteristics of senior adults' adaptation to mobile communication (Lai 2008b). First, there is a differential adaptation path between the 'young-old' (60-70) and the 'old-old' (75 or above). As for men, the former group has had prior hand-on experience of using ICT in their working setting. As for women, they learned from peers and friends about using ICT or mobile phone to coordinate their domestic household tasks like shopping and the maintenance of socio-familial networks. While for the senior aged one, they simply have not been fully aware of the availability of ICT gadgets and mobile communication – for them, learning mobile communication therefore needs the more tailor-made handset and the simplified telephony protocol (like single-button call). The 'young-old' are frequent and active users of mobile phone, in terms of the number/duration of calls and the communication services they engage in, respectively; for instance, they use both paid and free mobile services beyond the normal verbal communication.

Despite their differences in terms of learning experience and usage of mobile communication, both groups of elderly have been discovering, with positive experience and view of the benefits and offerings of the new way of multi-media communication for their socio-familial networking.

In Japan, accessibility, popularity and affordability of mobile phone in the market place, coupled with the concern for personal safety against accidents and risks, are the key factors for the aged people adoption of the Internet and mobile communications. Like other developed economies, in spite of the intrusiveness of mobile telephony which challenges social norm, elderly people are increasingly accepting that mobile phone can be a life saving device, a call for assistance, in emergency situation (Katz, Ed. 2008; Lai 2008b; MIC 2005, 2008a/b; MHLW 2008; Ling 2004).

The emerging trend for more senior adults to take up mobile communication can also be seen in, and reinforced by, the initiatives from the government's *u-Japan* project and the market driven promotion for senior-adults friendly mobile phone. The re-designing process for elderly-friendly mobile phone is underway too: simple and functional for the ageing users are the key concepts. For instance, mobile phone is redesigned for senior adults with bigger character-size(ing) for key-pad and display,

louder volume control, and pre-set phone number for their frequent calls.

To recapitulate, mobile communication can enable beneficiaries that the reinforcement of social relationship and the extension of socio-spatial network go hand-in-hand, for the elderly as well as for the younger generations. With mobile phone and/or the Internet connectivity available, offering the real time audio sound bits and/or video images, there is likelihood for an enhanced inter-generational communication between the senior and younger members of the family / society in future.

6. The Enhanced Communication in *u-Japan*: Rejuvenating Filial Piety?

With a production-driven regime for both export and domestic demand derived from mass consumerism on high tech gadgets, the communication market has been more liberalizing recently, resulting in the rapid development of Japanese information society (Srivastava 2004, 2005; MIC 2007; MPHPT 2004a/b; TCA 2005). The rapid adoption of mobile communication and the Internet is phenomenal, from less than 10% in the early 1990s to over 85% of the people use mobile phone and the Internet in 2007 (Lai 2008b; MIC 2007). Yet, the development of mobile communication is not freely evolving and in fact, a path-dependent one following not just the network development logics as shaped by market force and the state project for modernization (Mackenzie 2005), but also the fulfilment of social needs as circumstances arise (cf. Agar 2003; Benedict 1959; Hutchby and Barnett 2005, Licoppe and Inada 2005; Monk, et al. 2004; Okabe and Ito 2005; Okada 2005).

6.1 Activating New Media for Better Quality of Life

The social shaping of the *u-Japan* are more than obvious, as represented by the momentum and dynamics of the mode(s), patterns and of *keitai* (mobile) communication in Japan, which emerge, or have been emerging, from "a historically specific series of negotiations and contestations within and outside Japanese society" –half rightly mooted by Mizuko Ito (et. al. 2005, p.15). Such characterization of Japanese experience and processes of mobile communication is insightful yet contestable, as their path-breaking collective work (Ito, et al. 2005) in fact is the testament of the idiosyncrasies of Japanese mobile communication that are made and consumed in Japan, by and for Japanese.

The maximal utilization of high tech gadgets in mitigating social uncertainty and risk highlight the socio-cultural path dependent case, in the case studies on the parental-children use of mobile phone for reassuring personal safety and the senior adults' social engagement (Japan Times 2005a/b; Lai 2008b), teenagers using mobile phone for communication and games (Kamibeppu, et.al 2005; Miyaki 2005). Here,

Japanese using mobile phone for socio-familial relationship and the protection of both children and the elderly underscore such adaptation process for socio-familial needs. In actuality, it is the reinforcement of the existing social norm for searching harmony and consensus (wa) and sense of humane security.

Here, the instrumentality of Japanese mobile communication within the broader policy context of *u-Japan* reflects the logics of Japanese modernization project, namely (Western) technologies are using for the fulfilment of socio-familial needs, and socio-cultural norms at large (Benedict 1959; Bauman 2000; Dirlick 2003; Feldman 2000; Goodman, Ed., 2002; Kingston, 2004; Therborn 2003; White 2002). Obviously, this resembles the idiosyncrasy of Japanese modernization, an important yet sometimes forgotten aspect of the modernity project; hence the process of adaptive mobile communication is a negotiating one (Ito, et al. 2005). In other words, for mobile communicator in particular, what, where and how he/she can communicate (with whom) though is much shaped by the network conditions of pricing and technology as defined by the limited mobile service providers, it is equally conditioned by the expected and perceived beneficiaries, adapting to socio-familial logics and norms. In short, the recent maximal use of mobile phone for ensuring human security at large, attempting to strengthen socio-familial ties, redefines the landscape of mobile communication – we refer this as the bounded mobile communication (Lai 2008b).

Similarly, as shown in studies of the use of mobile communication for children safety (*Asahi Shimbun* 2005), the logics of the mitigation of social risk (strangers) in modern city are socio-cultural, familial and inter-personally embedded. It is Japanese specific socio-cultural processes of identity building, and the distinction between someone known and the stranger.

Socio-cultural change, though not determined by ICT, the inter-personalized mobile communications will interface, intertwine and synergize with socio-cultural domains (cf. Bauman 2000; Haddon 2004). Our previous discourse on the interfacing, repercussions, and synergetic effects of mobile communication in general, the mobile phone in particular, though positively oriented towards a better future, but it might reproduce the problems of media-centrism, namely, missing out the non-participants, the digital exclusion and divides (Murdock and Golding 2005; Wong, et al. 2005).

6.2 Spinning Human-Technology Interfaces for Social Destiny?

Senior adults are increasing yet differentially drawn into the ICT mediated communication (the Internet and mobile phone for instance) because of various reasons: their self-interest to be more self-reliant in the information age, or the reverse of the logics that they have no choice but being forced into the digital way(s) of communicative living as the policy result of government-sponsored, business led, ICT projects, like the *u-Japan*. For senior adults' usage of the Internet, for information

acquisition and learning purposes, it is growing with strong momentum (Nahm and Resnick 2008).

In actuality, the experience of senior adults in ICT mediated communication is highly differential. As we note earlier that it is the experience of the adults with ICT that shapes the readiness, and subsequent participation of them in learning new knowledge from the Internet. And it is more obvious that, many senior adults have not been familiar, and have difficulties to cope with (the ever-revolutionary) ICT; they are always behind the ever-upgrading and new innovation of both soft and hard ware. To enable senior adults to actively engage in ICT learning activities, various supportive measures, like the step-by-step simple and concise learning protocols with physical or online helpers to assist them, should be contributory (EU 2007, Nahm and Resnick 2008; Wong, et al. 2005).

In line with the global development of ICT and mobile communication, it is an irreversible trend that, in Japan, mobile phone will replace fixed line communication, stronger competition among the existing and new service providers, the new technologies from 3G to 3.5G and to 4G (Wieser 2005). The further integration and consolidation of ICT in wired and wireless communication is likely the dominant force, moving towards a mobile communication regime, to shape the bounded communication. In short, mobile communication technology is known in terms of technology development road map.

Here, the offerings and potentials of ICT, for the betterment for active ageing and ageing-in-place have been rightly mooted in academic discussion (cf. Mellor, et al. 2008; McGovern, et al. 2008; Weitzman, et al. 2008), put into policy initiatives not just at national level but also at supra-regional governmental bodies, like the EU (the one-billion Euro *Ageing Well in the Information Society* program of the European Commission (2007), and very good response by the private sector (interest) to foster growth for informational-knowledge society.

For instance, by combining a fixed-line service with a wireless local area network (LAN) communications system, NTT DoCoMo Inc. and other phone service providers have been enabling subscribers to use their handsets as fixed-line phones at home since 2006: usage of cell phones at home are charged at the same rates as fixed-line phones, which are cheaper than those for cell phones. Other mobile phone service providers follow similar service now. The implication for the integration of fixed line and mobile communications, making communication more location-less, is that communication will resemble more like the mobile one – yet the question of "Where are you now?" is still, and will be, embedded in every mediated communication.

Likewise, the competitive market force will likely shape the emergence of more mobile network providers, from the present major three to five providers in 2008. Their differential logics of operation, business models, integrating fixed line and

mobile network with the Internet, the (users-) content-and-social relationship (social network service) providing agencies (like Facebook, MySpace and Youtube) and the techno-specificity (e.g., telephony of IP phone, VoIP and the Skype-in/out) will likely determine the actual way of mobile communication for people: how, under what socio-spatial conditions and with what pricing (Fortunati 2005). Hence mobile communication will be still much a bounded one, though with more (re-)discovery of new socio-spatial sense beyond the question of "Where are You Now?"

But for social consequences of mobile communication, the social destiny at large, are highly uncertain, if not unknown, as many mobile communication studies note that the inter-personal mobile communication is reinforcing and redefining the existing social relationship, sometimes creating the new (intimate) one (Tomita 2005). Yet, the contrary might be also true that, mobile communication is to guard against the unwelcoming encounters as well as nurturing one's narcissism. To make an interim remark here, mobile communication is more technologically known but the destiny for human(ity) - mobile communication interfacing is definitely uncertain!

7. Envisioning Active Rejuvenated Filial Piety in the Informational Society?

Our case studies illustrated above highlight some experimental success of taking the advantages of the ICT offerings in the information age, enabling inter-generational socio-familial communication – a good indication towards a rejuvenated regime of filial piety. But to what extent can the ICT embedded social innovations develop for the ageing future? A brief critical remark to end this paper is provided here.

7.1 Contracting-Out-Sourcing of Filial Piety in New Labour Migration Regime?

Like other regions, the elderly care in Asia is a 24-hour caring service industry, mostly staffed by low-paid female workers and/or the FHH. This is within the context of the regional labour migration that the capacity of caring service might be substantially upgraded with a new regime of elderly care outsourcing / subcontracting and mobile labour force: it seems that nursing home in Hong Kong and Taiwan, if granted more flexibility for 'visitors' and 'labour' (co-nursing FHH workers), their experimentation will give insights for Japanese and other societies to learn for coping with their ageing population (See Fig.13).

Fig.13: Labour Migration in Asia

Figure 3.4.19 International Migration in East Asia

(One unit = 1,000 people)

Countries and regions	Labor force			Flow						Stock					
				Inflow of foreign workers			Outflow of national workers			Foreigners working domestically			Nationals working abroad		
	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997
Japan	66,666	67,660	67,870	142	130	94	-	55	62	790	710	660	181	61	134
Korea	22,196	21,950	21,604	-	37	32	(251)	251	237	373	285	253	-	-	[56]
China	760,750	739,920	705,280	-	-	-	770	426	334	-	63	82	-	-	-
Hong Kong	3,500	3,370	3,216	(83)	20	16	-	-	-	(237)	217	171	-	-	[50]
Taiwan	10,076	9,784	[9,210]	-	-	-	-	-	-	304	321	[251]	-	-	[120]
Singapore	2,150	2,192	1,876	-	-	-	-	-	-	590	530	530	(44)	-	[15]
Malaysia	10,240	9,616	9,038	-	231	-	-	-	-	1,163	880	1,472	-	(200)	[200]
Thailand	35,310	33,973	33,560	-	103	48	(158)	191	184	1,007	1,103	901	-	-	[550]
Indonesia	100,316	95,651	91,325	20	15	21	(480)	435	427	(33)	33	35	2,000	-	[1,000]
Philippines	35,120	30,908	30,265	-	-	[6]	868	841	748	(11)	-	21	-	4,940	4,700
Vietnam	41,900	38,643	-	473	-	-	-	37	22	(3)	-	-	-	300	-

Notes: ( ) indicates data from the previous year, [ ] indicates data from the following year. Because of data restrictions, definitions of countries may not be consistent.

Source: Past editions of the annual *Databook on International Comparison of Labor* (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, former Japan Institute of Lal reference materials distributed at the Workshop on International Migration and Labor Market in Asia 2005 (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training).

(Source: METI 2005)

The Japan's trade talks with South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) highlights the trend toward a more mobile labour regime for nursing care workers/ More specifically, Japan wants the Philippines to give greater investment and services trade opportunities to Japanese businesses in the proposed FTA, while the Philippines wants Japan's job market opened to Filipino nurses and lawyers. For Thailand, to lower tariffs on Japanese auto parts, and Bangkok's insistence that Japan open its markets to Thai rice, chicken and other agricultural products, and to ease its foreign labour rules so Thai physical therapists can work in Japan. In actuality, around a few thousands guest nursing care workers from Indonesia, Thai and the Philippines are now in training in Japan -- the importance of guest professionals, para-professionals and guest home helpers are more than obviously demanded by Japan's aging population. Coping with aging population in regional terms, the regime of flexible labour migration is evolving; though it cannot solve the fundamental shortage of nursing worker supplies (which are at the range of nearly half a million).

For Asian societies confronting globalizing forces, the difficulties in rejuvenating the pro-family value(s), like FP, are more than obvious. But we should challenge the mainstream economic logics, by re-orienting social and economic policy towards the harmonization of work and family life; three obvious issues need to be addressed.

First and foremost, the pro-family policy re-orientation should not be targeting to the individuals and families by various types of high profile campaign (using mass media and hence wasting people's time and resource to entertain such events), but we should change the policy and business practice that will enable more freedom and time for family members to interacting among themselves.

Secondly, global aging is a challenge for every developed economy. We have shown that the back-side of active FP might produce the burnt-out of caregivers, which is prompting to elderly abuse (Yan & Tang 2003). With the demographic trends of fewer children and an aging population, coupled with the economic problems Japan (and Asia) is experiencing, attitudes toward supporting elderly parents and aged relatives are also changing significantly. It is becoming increasingly difficult to expect that families will provide full support for their elderly, and the problems of illness and long term care have been identified as the greatest concern of the elderly (Lai 2001, cf. Ornatowski 1996).

Lastly, it is not just the disparity of life chance between the rural and urban sector, between the rich and the poor; but also the inhumanization of work, the disharmony (if not conflicts) between work-family life. To cope with the overwhelming demands for caring both the young and older generations by the working class, public policy should re-orientate itself towards an intergenerational care friendly one: the enabling of FP and parental duties, by granting such kind of leaves at work place, is one of the possible initiatives.

Under the economic uncertainties, younger generations have to face the less secure job tenure, and to be ready for more mobile job locations, and the dual roles of women in the family and the workforce…all these make them to think about whether or not to living together with their parents and supporting their parents in need of care as separate issues. In the past, living together with parents has implied caring for them, but now many younger people, especially daughters and daughters-in-law, are looking to ways of providing care for their parents that do not involve co-residence.

As a social (and political) virtue, many Asians (even Westerner) support the ideal for filial (piety) duty. But in a turbulent reality of flexible production regime, a mixing of work-and-family life, as well as the nomadic life experience for job (insecurity) and survival, the individual's contribution to FP is quite another thing – all these are contextually negotiated in the de-standardized life course. On the other hand, the aging population (the more educated one, like us) is seemingly, fatalistically yet realistically, accepting the non-FP reciprocity and they (we in future) do not expect nor blame much

about non-fulfillment of filial duty (K-S Chang 2003, cf. Hwang 1999, Jang et al. 2000).

Under economic liberalization regime and high mobility capital, labour and goods, labour force can be mobile, flexible and adaptive not just to the manufacturing of goods, but also helping to caring the aged as a form of service-for-foreign-currencies (an outsourcing of FP for elderly care). This new regional labour migration regime enables the shifting of FP burden (who and where to take care of the parents, how and how much?) from blood-tie and familial one to foreign guest workers. In actuality, the change of labour regime is being championed by regional and international governmental bodies, for the globalization project.

Based upon our illustrations on the policy initiatives for Active Ageing in the informational society and the practices for rejuvenating filial piety in Asia, in addition for the calling advancing the evidence-based research excellence, our concluding remarks are to stress the importance of not just the pro-active policy learning for making good quality of life with ICT enhanced supports, but also emphasizing the co-evolution for consensual policy (language) building project for a rejuvenation of socio-cultural norms of filial piety.

7.2 Filial Piety in Hyper-Modernizing Asia: ICT-embedded Opportunities Structure

Historically, the doubling of the elderly ratio (from 7% of the total population age 65 or above) used to occur at a steady pace. In the developed countries, it took 105 years in France, 85 years in Sweden, but in Japan, only 24 years. The Japanese case is in fact the fore-runner for Asian newly industrializing economies, like South Korea (Eu 2003), Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as the rapidly ageing China (after 2030). In all cases of ageing population, they are structurally linked to the rapid industrialization, hyper-modernization and urbanization, at a time of high and sustained economic development – the ideal case for the globalization project, championed by neo-liberal agencies like the IMF, WTO and the World Bank!

All these result in the geo-spatial relocation (or dislocation) of socio-familial inter-generational reciprocities that younger generation can no longer living with their ageing or aged parents, even if they wish to do so – this shapes the forms of inter-generational communication, hence challenging the practice for the virtue of filial piety.

Distancing from their traditional role of familial carer, in a highly competitive society, women have to work and be independent – that is the new form of the (Western state) sponsored feminism. They gain money from paid work, and renegotiate the caring role with the husband or their parents. Yet, daughters-in-law turn to the employment of waged caregivers not only because of their shortage of time and to lessen the burdens of labour, but also to retrieve some autonomy from the authority of

their mothers-in-law (Lan 2002, Kim et al. 1991, Kim & Kim 2003, Liu et al. 2000).

For caring the aging population, in Asian societies excepting Japan, the use of guest/foreign domestic labour is more than obvious. More recently, in Hong Kong, it is not uncommon that in private middle-class nursing home, FHH are also assisting the more formal case, though the children and relatives of the aged do visit them regularly; isn't it a new version of caring regime powered by mobile guest workers or outsourcing and/or subcontracting of elderly care?

The caring regime for out-sourcing and sub-contracting regime is seemingly functional and coupling with the state-advocated familism, which emphasizes on the quality of care and less-resources for better-quality of family life, in open (labour) market where efficiency and timeliness are the key for success. Yet, the adoption of FHH in family and/or community life is becoming a norm in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, for this, Japan is timely considering this option to cope with labour shortage in the long term care for aging population.

In future, the elderly care will become a 24-hour caring service industry, mostly staffed by low-paid female workers and/or the FHH. The capacity of caring service might be substantially upgraded with a new regime of elderly care outsourcing / subcontracting and mobile labour force: it seems that nursing home in Hong Kong and Taiwan, if granted more flexibility for 'visitors' and 'labour' (co-nursing FHH workers), their experimentation will give insights for Japanese and other societies to learn for coping with their ageing population.

Global ageing is a challenge for every developed economy. The destiny of any country's economy depends on longevity: the demography driven demands to shape community and service market (Beck 2000; Milanovic 2003, Lai 2004b, 2005b, 2007).

Exposed to the globalizing 'external' forces, capitals, goods, labour (and jobs) are more mobile than the previous regime of global order. Obvious impacts of globalization are on social and familial restructuring, affecting all people at large (WCSDG 2004). For individuals, the living chance of local communities is contingent upon the ups-and-downs of global business cycle, with a flexible regime of labour productivity and mobility.... Here, younger people are more nomadic and mobile for paid occupation, whilst the aged one is mostly community and locality-fixated. All these are likely shaping social-familial changes, challenging the very basic ideas of good virtue and customs (say, filial piety) of familial and inter-generational reciprocity (Hwang 1999, Meyer 2000).

Comparative studies have shown that the cultural virtues, say, filial piety, might produce the burnt-out of caregivers (Sung 2003), which is prompting to elderly abuse (Yan and Tang 2003; Lai 2007). Japan is no exception to other societies, particularly in Asia. The functional necessity requires young labour mobility, which in turns threatens the social fabrics, withering inter-generational physical contacts and communication at

the worst. Yet, mobile digital gadgets with the ICT empowered networking could have the positive contribution to re-engaging socio-familial ties, though they might be geo-physically separated or divided.

In spite of the fact that the ideal for filial piety is not practical in a turbulent reality of flexible production regime, compressing work-and-family life, as well as the nomadic life experience for (most of us are some form of) migrant workers, various studies on the so-called sojourns' mobile communication, using mobile phone for cross-border yet intra-familial communication highlight the liberating aspect of the benefits of being in the information age: in what Pei- Chia Lan (2006) describes as the global Cinderella with a mobile phone. The icon of the nomadic Cinderella represents migrant workers' mobile communication with their distant family members in the information age.

Through mobile phone, migrant workers can enjoy not just inter-generational communication, but also the encrypted informative instruction texting for managing family wealth; the (instruction and the digital proof for) remittance of fund back to the home becomes a way of life (*Migrant Remittances* 2005). As world remittance market is having exponentially growth with flexible global workforces recently, coupled with the ever-increasing mobile phone user by migrant workers, Vodafone and Citigroup launch a Vodafone-branded mobile-based international money transfer service targeting the global remittance market worldwide. (Citigroup, 2007). The new (sojourns-targeted) service provides senders and receivers of money with a simple, easy to use, secure, transparent and convenient method for sending money home with mobile phone or via the internet. Hence this new sojourn experience and mobile communication practice can, and will, enable their elders or parents to be readily ageing-in-place, with both communicative and financial supports from remote distance relatives.

After much deliberation on the new practices for active ageing in the information age, it is more than evident that the enhancement of the quality of (24-hour ubiquitous, borderless) inter-generational communication and care, empowered by ICT, can be a new way to foster the virtue of, and good practice for, filial piety for global ageing population for individual families in the information age.

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